



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Presentation by the OSCE Secretary General of the 2008 Programme Outline

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 30, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States welcomes warmly the launch of the 2008 Program Outline discussion. We have high hopes that this year's debate will generate firm political guidance on what activities our organization and its various missions should pursue next year. We look forward to a thematic discussion of our priorities: what we should be doing now is figuring out what we hope to accomplish and how we hope to accomplish it. The budgetary angle can be folded in later.

The Program Outline is a good starting point for this discussion. As I said last week, it is a clear, well-organized and concise document. We can already see the benefits of Performance Based Program Budgeting here, as strategies and objectives are clearly defined. At 145 pages, the Program Outline is still no easy read, but it is vastly better than its predecessors. We would like to specifically thank all of those who put so much time and effort into producing this document.

Particularly useful for busy Ambassadors like us, I hope, is the overview of thematic activities. The U.S. strongly supports these programs, including Confidence and Security Building Measures, Border Security and Management, Police-Related Activities such as community policing, Efforts to Combat Terrorism, the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings, and Tolerance and Non-Discrimination. These activities are at the very core of what our organization is all about, and should be integral parts of the Strategic Plan for every mission, institution, and office.

The United States firmly believes that the OSCE should increasingly turn its attention to areas and activities where it is needed most. While there is still important work to be accomplished in the Balkans, many of the states where we have field missions in this region have made substantial progress on many fronts. We should, during the Program Outline discussion, take a serious look at what parts of mandates have already been fulfilled, allowing for the reduction or elimination of activities.

In particular, we firmly believe that the Mission in Croatia will not need nearly the presence or level of activities proposed in this document, but rather will have fulfilled much of its mandate and be left with close-out activities to pursue in 2008.

Turning to Central Asia and the South Caucasus, we believe the missions should increase and expand their activities in order to fully implement their mandates and support these countries' effort to transform. We hope that all host countries will cooperate with the missions on the full spectrum of programs designed to help implement commitments throughout the OSCE region.

Last but certainly not least, we believe we need to build into this outline flexibility that would allow the organization to engage more robustly with its partners. We should not pursue critical goals, such as border management and counterterrorism, in a vacuum, without also noting the importance for the security of the OSCE region of challenges emanating from our near neighborhood. The Program Outline is sadly silent on this pivotal element. We hope to engage in a discussion of this issue now, as we contemplate our strategies and objectives for the coming year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.